



19th October 2020
Ref: DSG(2020)C050

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
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Please respond to:

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Dear Sir/Madam

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

I am writing to you, on behalf of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group, to voice our very serious concerns around the proposals to restructure Councillor numbers.

The Dounreay Stakeholder Group is a body representing over 20 organisations and community groups and its remit is to scrutinise and oversee the decommissioning activities of the Dounreay site as well as ensure that those responsible for the site continue to support and develop socio economic opportunities within our area.

We are absolutely appalled and completely disagree with the recommendations to make further reductions to the Council members (having done so in 2016). It appears to us that these decisions are obviously made sitting in an office in Edinburgh with no thought to the vast areas that our already overstretched Councillors have to cover here in Caithness and Sutherland.

It has long been a locally held belief that Inverness appears to be sucking everything back in centrally and your proposal to increase Inverness area by 2 more Councillors while reducing Caithness by 1 and Sutherland by 2 (and other areas like Skye). The proposal shows a complete disrespect and lack of understanding of the geography of the area.

A reduction of councillors in our areas of Caithness and Sutherland will have a completely detrimental impact on our rural communities especially at a time when the Dounreay site is running down and it is important as a community that we are all working together to ensure a diverse economy for the area once the site is closed. This close partnership working can only be done if we have enough resource to work together and a reduction of Councillors in both Caithness and Sutherland at this time (or in the future) cannot be and will not be supported by those who sit and represent various organisations on the DSG.

Whoever makes these broad-brush decisions should take a visit up the A9 and look at the landmass Councillors in Caithness and Sutherland already cover and then come back and tell us our communities will not be impacted by the proposed reductions you recommend.

We look forward to you considering this further and changing the dynamics of where Councillor increases should be – at this stage we do not believe Inverness requires more Councillors but the rural areas certainly do. The only outcome we wish to see is a status quo of the Councillors within Caithness and Sutherland or an increase to help them cover and take on more at a time that is crucial for the economic survival of our area.

Yours sincerely

Sent electronically without signature

David Alexander
DSG Vice-chair